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SUBJECT: DARFUR: MFA CRITICISES U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY REMARKS

Ref: Khartoum 02711

11. (U) Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Ali Al-Sadig described Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios' November 20 statements on Darfur as being "inappropriate and not serving to resolve the situation in Darfur." "We have no idea of the content of Plan A, never mind Plan B which he refers to. These are American arrangements which we have no knowledge of." Al-Sadig added, in remarks made on November 21 to the Government's Sudan News Agency, that it is "regrettable that the U.S. administration would confine the problem of Darfur in its various dimensions to the question of combined forces only. This is a misinterpretation that would not help reach the desired solution to the problem."

12. (U) The spokesman pointed out that if Natsios was referring to the outcome of the Addis Ababa meeting, the Government of Sudan was still conducting internal deliberations with respect to its conclusions. Furthermore, he charged that Natsios had ignored the fact that agreement was reached on most of the outstanding questions under review, with remaining differences confined to just two points, the size of the force and command arrangements.

13. (SBU) Comment: This statement and other public comments of Sudanese officials (reftel) reflect a concerted effort to spin a positive outcome and distance themselves from assurances made at the November 16 AU-UN meeting in Addis Ababa. The international community will have to keep up the pressure on Sudan to follow-through on these and other, outstanding, commitments dating from the May 2006 signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement. End comment.

HUME